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CANADA AND
THE WAR

BY

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CANADA AND THE WAR

CANADA, when the war broke out, was passing through a period of severe industrial and financial depression, in common with the rest of the civilized world. Capital had practically stopped flowing in from this country, and the Dominion, as a new country developing its natural resources and largely dependent on the London market for the capital needed for that purpose, was hard hit, more so perhaps than some of her neighbours. A rigid economy became necessary. Work on public undertakings for the most part came to an end, and there was a pause in the rapidity of railway construction that had characterized the prosperous years that had preceded this period of depression. In this country there was a feeling that Canada had been trying to progress too quickly and had been somewhat reckless in her expenditure. In the case of some of the smaller western towns, perhaps, public expenditure had been in advance of actual needs. This had been caused largely by the enormous immigration that had taken place. Towns had sprung up in no time; where a few years ago there was bald prairie would be found an ambitious little town of a few thousand inhabitants. If so much could be done in one decade, much more would be done in the next. So reasoned these well-to-do Canadians, to whom optimism is as the breath of the straits. And when the charge of extravagance is brought against them, it must also be admitted that they had some reason for their faith in the future. This optimism, which is sometimes deprecated over here, is an asset in the new country, and

Canada would not be where she is to-day if it had not been for the optimism of her sons. The Canadian Pacific Railway would never have been built across the bare prairie—to nowhere, so to speak, if far-seeing men had not intelligently anticipated the future.

Nothing could demonstrate the vitality and energy of the Canadian people more convincingly than the manner in which they met the news of the outbreak of the war. They were hardly in a condition, one would think, to bear any additional burdens. The news of the declaration of war came suddenly, and with a spontaneity that has astonished the world, Canada recognized that this was her war quite as much as it was the Old Country's. General von Bernhardi, whose prophecies about the war have fallen singularly short of fulfilment, stated and believed that the self-governing colonies of the British Empire could be complacently ignored so far as a European War was concerned. In this he proved himself as in other matters to be not a true prophet. Indeed, the tie between the Dominions Overseas and Great Britain is wholly beyond the comprehension of German writers. Dealing with Bernhardi's statement that the colonies might be ignored, Sir Robert Borden, the Prime Minister of Canada, said after the declaration of war :

I venture to predict that before this war closes, unless it reaches a conclusion sooner than we can reasonably expect, the German armies will find confronting them 2,500,000 men from these same self-governing dominions. These men, with the forces of the Empire, will deem it an honour to fight side by side with the valiant troops of France and Belgium, whose courage and endurance under the most deadly trials have already aroused the admiration of the world. . . . We have not glorified war nor sought to depart from the paths of peace, but our hearts are

firm and united in the inflexible determination that the cause for which we have drawn the sword shall be maintained to an honourable and triumphant issue.

These words of Sir Robert Borden were no idle boast. He knew his people and the response they would give to the Empire's call. The Canadian people have recognized from the first that when Great Britain is at war Canada is at war, and there has been no hesitation in their eagerness to take up their share of the burden. When war was declared, the excitement throughout the Dominion reached fever heat. What occurred at Winnipeg was characteristic of the feeling throughout the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the international boundary to the far north. Large crowds assembled outside the newspaper offices anxiously awaiting the latest news from Europe. Immediately the word went forth that Great Britain had declared war, the people went wild with enthusiasm. They waved hats and handkerchiefs, and called for cheers for Canada and the Old Flag, Tommy Atkins, Jack Tar, the commanders of the British Navy and Army, Sir Robert Borden, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and other prominent Canadians. And behind all this exuberant demonstration there was a grave and set determination to 'see this thing through'. With the announcement that British troops were to cross the Channel to take their place alongside the French and Belgian armies, came the realization that Canada's manhood would also have to take its place in the firing line. For a moment the crowd was sobered, but just then the music of the Veterans' Regimental Band was heard coming down the main street. The people rushed to cheer the men who had already taken their part in the defence of the empire. No sooner had the Veterans passed than the 90th

Regiment came by, and a deafening cheer met the regiment—a cheer that was repeated again and again when it was seen that there were in the ranks a large number of recruits in mufti. All over Canada there was the same enthusiasm. Financial depression was forgotten, and even party feeling—politics play a large part in Canadian life—was laid aside, and the people of Canada stood united like one man, animated with one sole object, to ‘see the thing through’.

The well-known Canadian writer ‘Ralph Connor’ gave utterance to the sentiments of the people when he said :

There is no truce, nor can be. No peace is possible. Two sets of principles are in death grips—force as an empire-builder against the will of a free people, justice as an international arbiter as against the sword of the mighty, international honour as an eternal obligation rather than as a mere temporary convenience. These things make peace impossible, and these things make war worth while. What, then, is Canada’s immediate duty ? It stands as clear as the morning sun above the prairie rim. The Empire stands to-day for liberty, justice, honour among nations and men, and Canada stands with the Empire for these. It is no longer a question of a colony giving support to the motherland. We have gone far past that. It is a question of whether Canada shall stand with free nations who believe in government by free choice, justice among nations, honour as an eternal obligation, and with her last man and her last dollar fight for these things that determine a nation’s character and its place in history. I repeat that it is no longer a question of aiding the motherland in a fight for national or empire existence. Canada is herself a nation with a proud sense of nationhood. Canada’s future is involved in this conflict, and with every instinct of her national soul and with every throb of her national life she hates and opposes the spirit, the ideals, the

methods for which the German Kaiser with his Prussian Junkerdom is now so desperately contending.

This was the spirit in which Canada met the crisis. The Opposition no less than the Government flung themselves wholeheartedly into the work of speedily putting to some practical purpose the sentiments that had stirred the people of Canada to the very depths. Quickly a contingent of 33,000 men was raised, and the village of Valcartier, about eighteen miles from Quebec, was in a few weeks turned into a military camp. Crops were gathered in, and farmsteads disappeared to make way for rows of white tents. The peaceful village was replaced by a martial city complete with streets, sewers, and water mains, electric lights, and telephone. The troops began to roll in from every quarter of Canada. There was no lack of men to volunteer for service. Recruiting went on briskly, and men had to be turned away in scores and await formation of further contingents. In a few weeks the contingent of 33,000 men were dispatched to this country to undergo training on Salisbury Plain. The transports were convoyed over by British warships and landed here without being interfered with by the enemy—a wonderful lesson to the world on the sea-power of Great Britain. In the meantime the Royal Canadian Regiment, a Regular regiment, had been dispatched to garrison Bermuda, and further contingents for service at the front—a second and a third—were being recruited. And now a fourth is being enrolled.

It is significant of the depth of Canadian feeling on the subject of the war that a journal always so sympathetic towards pacifism as the *Toronto Globe* should be found calling upon the Dominion Government to do even more than it has done in the way of sending men

to the front. This journal asked the other day why the Royal Canadian Regiment, consisting of almost a thousand of Canada's well-trained professional soldiers, should remain resting in garrison in Bermuda instead of being sent to France, and their places taken by partly-drilled Canadian Volunteers. Again, it remarked that 1,200 men of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, the best and most experienced horsemen and skilled rifle shots in America, are 'fairly itching to get into action'. The ranks of 1,000 could easily be filled, said the *Globe*, with partially-trained home defenders. 'The Germans', added the journal, 'won't wait until untrained officers and men are licked into shape.' The *Globe*, which strenuously opposed Sir Robert Borden's proposal to vote three Dreadnoughts to the navy, has in the matter of the war given most generous support to the Government. It declared the other day that outside the large centres of population, the war was regarded as something remote and interesting only as a drama, the action of which may be followed in the daily press, and it went on to say :

It is time to wake up. The Empire is fighting a life-and-death battle. British liberty is in danger. Canada's own national existence is in peril. What consideration could be expected in the event of a victory for German militarism, from the men who burned Louvain, who wrecked Rheims, and who are now slaying defenceless non-combatants with bombs dropped from the clouds by invisible murderers? The heel of the conqueror would be heavy upon us. Our sons would no longer be volunteers but conscripts. And there would be no help from our neighbours to the south. The United States would hardly care to challenge the might of the Germanic powers were they to prove themselves stronger than Britain, France, and Russia combined.

These are striking words, especially seeing the source from which they come, and it is interesting to note the moral which the writer draws :

What is the remedy ? Clearly there is need for a campaign of education. The country requires information as to the causes of the war, the issues involved, and the pressing need for men. The members of Parliament should be busy night after night in their constituencies and at convenient centres ; wherever audiences from the townships can be gathered, public men of prominence like Sir Robert Borden, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir George Foster, Premier Hearst, and Mr. Rowell should be invited to speak to the people. The call comes clearest to young Canada. In the fight for freedom the Dominion turned to him, confident that he will not hear unmoved the cry : ' Your King and country need you.'

The first Canadian contingent has now been for some months on active service, and soon won praise from high quarters when they had been only a few days in the trenches. General Alderson wrote to Sir George Perley, saying :

I knew they would do well, but they have done much better than I expected, and all has gone with less trouble than was anticipated. All, Artillery, Infantry, Engineers, Medical people, Supply, &c. have settled into their places and work in a way that makes me both pleased and proud.

Lord Kitchener, in making a statement in the House of Lords after the battle at Neuve Chapelle, said :

I should like also to mention that the Canadian Division showed their mettle and have received the warm commendation of Sir John French for the spirit and bravery with which they have performed their part.

Since then, as every one knows, the Canadians have won lasting fame at the battle of Ypres, where they

succeeded in 'saving the situation'. Unsupported they held the Germans when the French line gave way owing to the descending fumes of the gas the Germans sent into their midst. As one officer, in speaking of the battle, said, 'The Canadians have achieved glory that will never be forgotten, but the price paid was awful.' The casualties numbered over 6,000, and the list at the time of writing is said to be incomplete. Of the battalions engaged, some had only a pitiful remnant left, but Ypres was saved.

A second contingent of 10,000 men has been recruited and dispatched to this country, and a third contingent is being raised. Sir Robert Borden, the Canadian Prime Minister, has declared that if necessary 200,000 to 300,000 men will be furnished by Canada.

The attitude of Canada with regard to the war has proved a sad disappointment to Germany. German statesmen expected that the 2,500,000 of French Canadians would not be too willing to fight for their national liberty, that the 400,000 Germans and 120,000 Austrians in Canada would remain absolutely and entirely neutral. Instead of that, the French Canadians are organizing complete units of their own race and creed for the contingents, and in the city of Berlin, Ontario, where the population is mostly of German birth or extraction, the inhabitants have passed resolutions supporting the allies, besides contributing large sums of money for the purposes of the war. Again, when the Dominion Parliament met in February, the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne was moved by Mr. William G. Weichsel, the German Canadian representative of North Waterloo, Ontario, and was seconded by Mr. Honore Achim, the French Canadian representative of Labelle, Quebec. The French Cana-

dians' support of the cause is easy to understand, though it is probably due quite as much to the German outrage upon the little nation of Belgium as to the menace to the ancient motherland of the province of Quebec. But the German Canadians' sympathy with Great Britain is not so easy to understand. Most likely the reason is to be found in the past history of British institutions in Canada. Germans find freedom, popular government, and democratic institutions in Canada, and soon become good Canadians. The contributions to British and Canadian patriotic funds from German settlements in Ontario, such as Berlin, Waterloo, Hanover, Preston, and Zurich, have been on as generous a scale as those from purely British communities. The Germans in the West are comparatively newcomers in Canada, and have not had time to appreciate to the full the boon of living under free British institutions, but even with them German intrigues have failed to evoke sympathy. It may be said, indeed, that Canada, though she has a large population of foreign emigrants, has taken up her share of the burden of the war without a single dissentient voice being raised against her policy.

It is not only in sending troops to the battlefields of Europe that Canada has shown her patriotism. In the matter of money and money's worth she has not been behind in her contributions to her own national patriotic fund. Provincial Governments, municipalities, and individual citizens have vied with each in giving to the many societies devoted to the welfare of the wounded, the assistance of those dependent on men who have volunteered for service, and kindred objects. But, as Mr. J. Obed Smith, head of the Canadian Emigration Department in London, pointed out the other day in an admirable address, Canada has not stopped here.

The Dominion—to quote from Mr. Smith's summary—has sent 1,000,000 bags of flour to be baked into quartern loaves, free of charge, by bakers in England, and to be distributed among the necessitous poor. A grant has also been made of \$100,000 for the Hospice Canadien in France, and \$50,000 for Belgian sufferers. The province of Alberta has given 500,000 bushels of oats to the Mother Country and 5,000 bags of flour to the Belgians; British Columbia 1,000,000 cans of salmon, and \$5,000 to the Belgian Relief Fund; Manitoba 50,000 bags of flour, and \$5,000 to the Belgian Relief Fund; New Brunswick 100,000 bushels of potatoes, and 15,000 barrels of potatoes to the Belgian Relief Fund; Nova Scotia \$100,000 to the Prince of Wales's Fund, apples for troops, food and clothing for Belgians; Ontario \$500,000 in cash, 250,000 bags of flour, 100,000 pounds of apples for the navy, £15,000 to the Belgian Relief Fund; Prince Edward Island 100,000 bushels of oats, besides cheese and hay. Quebec has given four million pounds of cheese, and \$25,000 to the Belgians; Saskatchewan 1,500 horses for remounts to the British Empire, and \$5,000 to Belgians, while cities like Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto, besides contributing largely to funds, are providing batteries of guns and other war requisites. The American citizens in Toronto have contributed \$125,000 to the families of Canadian volunteers. A gentleman in Montreal has given his steam yacht, paid the cost of taking the 5th Royal Highlanders to Europe, and presented \$500,000 to the Canadian Patriotic Fund. Another has raised a regiment of infantry at his own cost. The scattered settlers of the Hudson Bay district have collected £600 towards the expense of the war. The members of the North-West Mounted Police have given £173 and are contributing one day's pay every

month as long as it is required for the purposes of the war. The far-off district of the Yukon, in the Arctic Circle, has offered to provide 500 men and has given £1,200 in cash. Mention must also be made of two submarines bought by the Dominion Government for the defence of the Pacific coast.

The native Red Man of Canada is also desirous of taking his share with his white brother. At a recent meeting of the Blood Indians, the tribal funds were voted to the sum of £200, and the resolution was signed by Chief Shot-Both-Sides and Chief Ermine Waters. This is typical of the resolutions of some seventeen other tribes, who, in all, have contributed £2,600. Some of the Redskins are already members of the Canadian Contingent on Salishury Plain, and several tribes in Northern British Columbia have offered to form a corps of Guides, though it is difficult to see just how they could be useful on the Continent of Europe.

McGill University is equipping an ambulance corps officered by its own students, and the University of Toronto has offered to provide and equip a base hospital with 1,040 beds manned by its own medical students and staff.

This list of donations is, no doubt, far from complete, but it will suffice to show how eager Canadians are to do their part. It may safely be said that there is not in the whole of Canada a single village which has not contributed to some patriotic fund. Nor must the excellent work of the Canadian Red Cross Society be overlooked. It will be a surprise to many to know that Canada's assistance in the care of the wounded has been perhaps on an even more lavish scale than her other valuable help. Through the kindness of Lieutenant-Colonel Hodgetts, Canadian Red Cross Commissioner,

the writer is able to give the following details of the Red Cross work that Canada is doing. The Mount Vernon Hospital at Hampstead was for a time officered by Canadian doctors and nurses who have since been ordered to France. Here it should be said that some 300 Canadian nurses have come over as part of the Canadian Army Medical Corps. These nurses—Nursing Sisters is their proper title—have the honorary rank of Lieutenant; and in their smart uniform, which is thoroughly military in appearance, the two stars on the shoulder indicate their rank.

The Canadian Army Medical Corps, in command of which is General Carlton Jones, has taken over Moore Barracks, Shorncliffe Camp, and fitted it up to take in 700 patients. Other hospitals in which Canadians are interested are :

The Duchess of Connaught's Canadian Red Cross Hospital is situated at Cliveden, Taplow, which was kindly lent by Mr. and Mrs. Astor. The hospital was equipped by the Canadian Red Cross Society, and is maintained by Canadian funds. This hospital, which has for some time been receiving wounded soldiers, is being enlarged to the capacity of 500 beds.

The Queen's Canadian Hospital, Shorncliffe, which is maintained by the Canadian War Contingent Association (a body of London Canadians), which equipped it. The building was generously provided by Sir Arthur and Lady Markham. Sir William Osler and Mr. Donald Armour are in charge, and the nurses are all Canadians.

The women in Canada have provided the Canadian Women's Hospital with 100 beds as an addition to the Naval Hospital at Haslar, and have furnished forty motor ambulance cars.

The Hospital at Le Touquet, though equipped and

maintained by the War Office, is entirely officered by Canadian doctors and nurses.

The Military Hospital at Dinard is the result of a gift from the Canadian Government to the French War Office of \$100,000 to equip and run for one year a hospital with one hundred beds. It is controlled by the Hon. Philippe Roy, Canadian Commissioner in Paris, and is officered by French surgeons and nurses. The Canadian Red Cross Society has also contributed £15,000 in cash, and handed over twelve motor ambulances as a gift to the British Red Cross Society. It has also given £1,900 to supply one coach in Princess Christian's hospital train. It has besides handed over to the British Red Cross Society 10,000 blankets, 10,000 pairs of socks, and 10,000 flannel shirts; and has contributed £2,500 to the St. John's Ambulance Association for the equipping of one ward of the hospital to be set up in France and operated by the Association. In addition some twenty doctors and sixteen nurses have been loaned to the military hospital at Boulogne. The people of the cities and towns of the province of Quebec are contributing very generously towards a French Military Hospital. Handsome gifts have also been given by several wealthy Canadians.

Nor have the unhappy Belgian refugees been forgotten in Canada. In the work of contributing supplies for distressed Belgians, Nova Scotia has taken a leading part. No fewer than four vessels have come from Halifax with cargoes of food and clothing for the refugees. These supplies have been taken to Holland, where they are distributed by the American Relief Committee.

Canada is also helping the Empire in other ways, and though, perhaps, these other ways should not be spoken of in the same connexion as her generous gifts, they are

none the less very useful. In the first place she is preparing to provide this country with more wheat than she usually exports to us. The Canadian Government has done all it could to encourage the sowing of an increased acreage with wheat, and the result has been a 'Back to the land' movement. A larger area than ever will be put under crop this year, and with anything like favourable climatic conditions the augmented harvest ought to go far towards maintaining the food supplies of the world, which might otherwise have been seriously jeopardized. The Dominion has also been supplying large quantities of ammunition to the War Office. She is also supplying woollen clothing, preserved foodstuffs, and harness. It is estimated that the amount of orders placed in Canada by the British, French, and Russian Governments already exceeds in value £8,000,000. The War Office has also gone to Canada for remounts. The Canadian Government is also helping the Mother Country by prohibiting the export to any enemy country of nickel, of which she owns nearly all the world's supply. These services are quoted merely to show how useful Canada has been in supplying war material, for, of course, the benefit has been mutual. Many factories in Canada have been kept working which would otherwise have been on half time, if not closed down.

In one respect Canada must suffer through the war, and that is in the drying up of the flow of emigration into the country. Here, be it said, she has shown an unselfish patriotism. Usually at this time of the year Canadian emigration agents are busy procuring emigrants. To-day, if some young man of service age presents himself at the emigration offices he is advised to join the army. The very windows of the Emigration Offices at Charing Cross tell the story of the Canadian Govern-

ment's policy. Instead of the usual exhibition of Canadian produce and pictures meant to attract emigrants, all the window space is devoted to recruiting pictures. The motor vans which used to tour the countryside with lectures on what Canada had to offer settlers, are now being used by the War Office.

Thus in every possible direction Canada is playing her part right well; and when we think of what she has done and is doing we must remember that she is accepting her share of the burdens of a war that was made without her having a word to say in the matter. She is bearing heavy increased taxation to meet her responsibilities—a heavy burden on a young nation. In addition she has had to take extensive measures for the defence of her own territory, and her frontier line is one of 3,000 miles in length. Canada is not looking to the Monroe doctrine to protect her, but intends to defend herself. Sir Wilfrid said the other day, 'If Canada is to be saved, I do not want her saved by the Monroe doctrine, but by the Canadian people.' This war seems to have brought within sight a time when the Dominions Overseas will have to be represented in the Councils of the Empire. As things are at present, the Mother Country has no right to demand any help from Dominions, though experience has taught her that she may confidently look for it. Sir George Perley, the Acting High Commissioner for Canada, speaking in London recently, said:

We have full autonomy in self-government in the Dominions, but we have no voice in foreign policy, nor in the issues of war and peace, nor in any of the other matters that are of common interest to the whole Empire. We have come to the period of development in our Empire relationship when we must come closer together, otherwise we may drift gradually apart. We must look forward to a not distant future when there

will be brought into operation some altered arrangements by which the Dominions will be called to the Councils of the Empire in matters affecting Imperial questions.

Since this speech was made, the Imperial Government has announced that the Dominions Overseas are to be consulted as to terms of peace when the war is over. This, it is to be hoped, is a beginning of the recognition that is due to the daughter nations who have shown such magnificent readiness to stand by the Mother Land in time of trouble.

Surely it is the irony of fate that this war, which, it was prophesied by German writers, was to rend the British Empire in pieces, should be the means of binding fastly together the nations which make up that Empire. The silver lining to the black clouds of war is to be found in the fact that the German Emperor is unwittingly cementing the bonds which unite the daughter nations of the Empire to the Mother Country.

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